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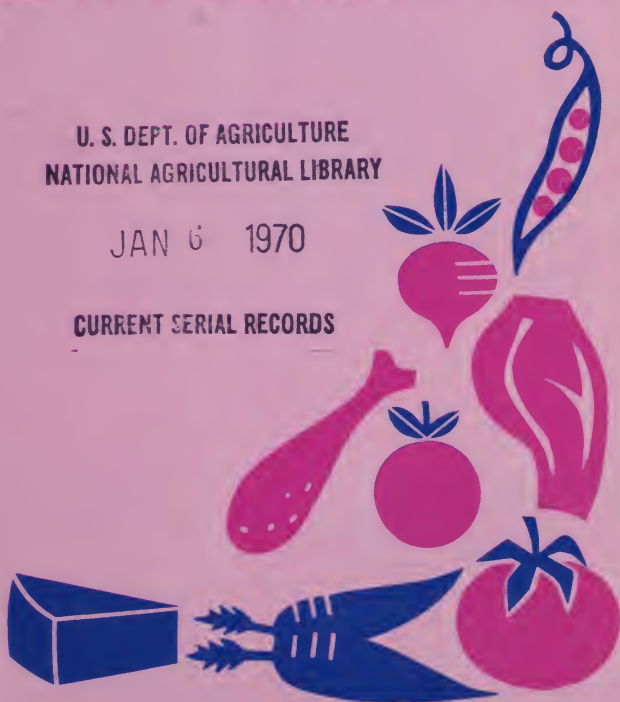
FOOD STAMP PROGRAM

MORE FOOD
BETTER DIETS
for Low-Income Families

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
FOOD AND NUTRITION SERVICE PA-930

THE FOOD STAMP PROGRAM

The Food Stamp Program enables low-income families to buy more food of greater variety so they can have better diets.

In this way, it helps improve the health of the Nation's low-income families through better nutrition.

Low-income families using food stamps eat more and better foods, with most of the increase in livestock products, fruits, and vegetables.

In addition to helping low-income families, the Food Stamp Program also benefits their communities. Retail food sales increase because of the greater buying power of food stamp shoppers. And farmers throughout the country benefit from the expanded markets created by the Food Stamp Program.



HOW IT OPERATES

Families trade the amount of money they normally spend for food for coupons that are worth more. The U.S. Government pays the difference between the amount each family pays and the total value of the coupons it gets.

These families then use the coupons to buy food in retail stores. The coupons may be used to buy any food, except certain imported items. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) approves retailers to accept coupons, and retailers agree to follow the rules for accepting and redeeming the coupons. Food retailers turn the coupons in to banks or approved food wholesalers.

The Food Stamp Program was created by Congress to help make sure people are well fed—and not poorly nourished.



Low-income families need many other things, too—but food is one of the most important for the health children need so they can learn, and adults need so they can work.

If families put pressure on grocers to let them have anything but food for the stamps—or if grocers break the rules—it means trouble for everyone involved and could seriously damage the continued operation of the program.

So, it is most important that participants know the rules and follow them.

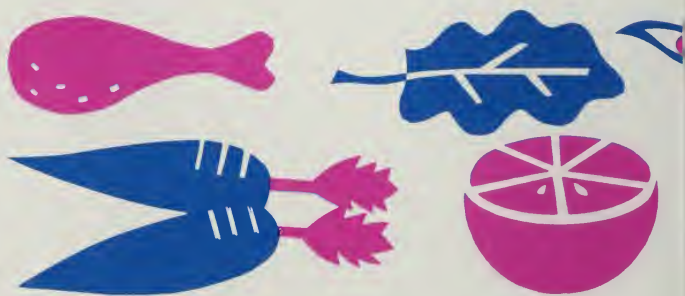
Education in food management—planning, buying, and preparation—is an important part of the Food Stamp Program. This activity is carried out by Federal-State agencies together with numerous private groups and individuals, to help food stamp users get the most benefit from their increased food-buying power.



WHO IS ELIGIBLE

Families and individuals who are determined by State welfare agencies to need food help may choose to take part in the Food Stamp Program. Generally, those getting some type of public or general assistance under a State's welfare program are eligible, as long as they are living in a household and prepare food to eat at home. Other families may also be eligible if their income does not exceed certain amounts. The income limits are worked out by the State and approved by USDA. They must be in line with standards used by the State in its own welfare program. Where operating, the Food Stamp Program is available to all persons in need regardless of race, color, or national origin.

Many poor people are not getting the benefits they should from food help now available to them either from the Food Stamp Program or the Commodity Distribution Program, which provides federally donated foods to low-income families. Whether it's because of fear, ignorance, suspicion, lack of motivation, lack of transportation, physical or mental handicaps—there is usually a reason that can be overcome. And the reason can often be dealt with by concerned citizens of good will who can lend a helping hand.



USDA GOAL: Food Help for All Who Need It

USDA's goal is a food assistance program in every county and independent city. There are still some local governments that do not offer a food assistance program. But USDA is working constantly with these governments trying to get them to provide either the Food Stamp Program or the Commodity Distribution Program, so that all low-income families that need food help can get it.

The State agency responsible for the federally aided public assistance program is responsible for the operation of the Food Stamp Program within the States. This State welfare agency works with USDA's Food and Nutrition Service to help start the Food Stamp Program in areas of the State that want it. Therefore, anyone seeking more information about the Food Stamp Program should contact the State welfare agency.

This publication supersedes PA 645, "The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food Stamp Program—A Method for Sharing Our Agricultural Abundance." December 1969

